

# Section A

## General Material

# **Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Tentative Convention Agenda**

November 10 & 11, 2017  
Christ Episcopal Church, North Hills

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## **Friday, November 10**

**Noon to 4:00pm – Exhibit Set-up (Undercroft)**

**5:00 p.m. – Registration (Undercroft) – Light refreshments available**

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| 6:00 p.m. Call to Order / Opening Prayer<br>Election of Secretary<br>Appointment of Parliamentarian<br>Report on Parish Assessments and Audits<br>Declaration of Quorum | 6:20 p.m. Report of Nominating Committee<br>First Ballot   |
| 6:15 p.m. Approval of Minutes of 151st Annual<br>Convention<br>Adoption of Rules of Order   | 6:35 p.m. Plenary 1 – The Rt. Rev. Andrew<br>Doyle, Bishop of Texas  |
|   | 7:00 p.m. Closing Prayer   |
|   | 7:30 p.m. Dinner at Holy Trinity Greek<br>Orthodox Church, 985 Providence<br>Blvd., Pittsburgh 15237 (approx. 1.5<br>miles from Christ Church) |

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## **Saturday, November 11**

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| 8:30 a.m. Registration continues<br>Coffee and Refreshments                                   | 1:15 p.m. Small Group Discussions                                      |
| 9:00 a.m. Convention Reconvenes in Nave<br>Opening Prayer<br>Election Report<br>Second Ballot | 2:30 p.m. Election Report, Fourth Ballot if<br>necessary               |
| 9:15 a.m. Budget Presentation & Adoption  | 2:40 p.m. Report of Committee on Constitution<br>and Canons & Adoption |
| 9:30 a.m. Plenary 2 – Bishop Doyle  | 2:50 p.m. Report of the Committee on<br>Resolutions & Adoption         |
| 10:15 a.m. Election Report and Third Ballot, if<br>necessary                                  | 3:00 p.m. Report of the Compensation<br>Committee & Adoption           |
| 10:45 a.m. Convention Eucharist   | 3:10 p.m. Small Group Recap / Bishop's<br>Address                      |
| 12:15 p.m. Lunch, District Meetings, Elections  | 4:00 p.m. Adjournment and Closing Prayer                               |

## Statement of Purpose of the Convention

The Convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh meets annually to transact the many regular business items of any such assembly. Among these are: to celebrate Holy Communion and to hear the Annual Address; to elect persons to the various diocesan committees and boards; to consider any changes (amendments) to our Constitution or Canons; to receive, discuss, and act upon the assessment and budget; to receive reports from the various committees of the diocese; and to act upon any motions, notices, and resolutions properly presented to the Convention.

## General Directions

**Registration**– All deputies (clerical and lay) must register their attendance using the proper sign-in sheets provided. The sign-in sheets are to be left on the respective tables. Alternates replacing regular deputies must declare on the sign-in sheet which deputy they are replacing. Please sign your name as you wish it recorded and read.

**Seating** – Seating is assigned by District; look for signs as you enter the meeting space. There is a reserved area for non-parochial clergy. Guests are not to sit in the District seating area. There will be a separate seating section for guests.

**Ballots** – The ballots for all those duly qualified to vote will be distributed in each registration packet. Deputies being replaced by an alternate must provide their ballots to the person replacing them.

## Policy on Distribution of Materials

1. No material will be placed on the official registration table.
2. No material is to be distributed on the Convention floor except as authorized by the Standing Committee.
3. A table for official documents relating to the business of Convention will be provided.
4. The Sergeant at Arms will monitor and enforce these rules under the direction of the President and Convention Committee Chairman.

# **RECORD OF THE 2016 ANNUAL CONVENTION**

## **Minutes of the 151st Annual Convention (Unapproved)**

### **The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church in the United States A.D. November 4 & 5, 2016**

The 151st Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of The Episcopal Church in the United States (the “Diocese”) convened on Friday, November 4th, 2016 at St Paul’s Episcopal Church, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

Registration of Convention Deputies began at 4:00 p.m. in order for the necessary certifications to be completed.

The Convention commenced at 7:00 p.m. The Right Rev. Dorsey W. M. McConnell called the Convention to order, and following an opening prayer, the Bishop asked the Rev. Louis B. Hays to offer a general welcome.

Following the welcome, the Bishop showed the Convention a video with a message from the Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Michael Curry, regarding his upcoming visit to the Diocese in February of 2017. A transcript of the Presiding Bishop’s remarks is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

The Bishop then shared a historical note that one hundred years ago, the Annual Convention of the Diocese passed the first reading of the changes to our diocesan constitution that allowed women to sit as deputies to Convention. He then announced his appointment of Dr. Joan Gundersen as Convention Manager and directed that any logistical issues or problems be directed quietly to her.

The Bishop then recognized the Rev. Lou Hays, who, on behalf of Diocesan Council, nominated the Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair as Secretary to Convention. There being no other nominations, Canon Shoucair was elected as Secretary by acclamation.

The Bishop then appointed Ms. Betsy Hetzler as Parliamentarian for the Convention, Mr. Jon Delano as Judge of Elections and the Rev. William Geiger as Deputy Judge of Elections.

The Bishop then appointed Mr. Andy Roman, Mr. Peter Balfe, and Mr. Paul Barker to serve on the Committee of Claims of Lay Deputies to Seats; and the Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair, Mr. Andy Roman and Mr. Rich Creehan to serve on the Committee on Claims of Parishes.

The Bishop then recognized Ms. Kathy Baird, the Judge of Audits, who made the following motion:

WHEREAS, from 2008 to the summer of 2016, the parish of the Church of the Advent, Brookline, was not an active participant in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, but now it has resumed active participation.

Therefore be it: RESOLVED, that the parish of the Church of the Advent, Brookline, is relieved of the obligation to pay any invoices for assessments rendered by the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh applicable to calendar years 2008 to 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all assessments (Diocesan, National (TEC), and Growth Fund) for the Church of the Advent, Brookline, be waived for calendar year 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any other similarly situated parish that resumes active participation in the Diocese of Pittsburgh will be treated in the same fashion.

The motion, duly made and seconded, passed unanimously.

Ms. Baird then reported that all parishes were in compliance with the canonical assessments for the year. She reported that three parishes had not completed audits and were eligible for seat and voice but not vote: St. John's, Donora; St Michael's, Rural Valley; and St. Bartholomew, Scottdale.

The Bishop then recognized the Secretary to Convention, who moved the following motion:

RESOLVED, that because the Church of the Advent, Brookline resumed active participation in the Diocese after the deadline for parochial reports and audits had passed, that the canonical requirement for a parochial report and audit for 2016 be waived.

The motion was duly seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

The Bishop then called upon the Secretary to report on quorum.

The Secretary reported that there were seventy-three (73) lay deputies present whose credentials had been received before the Convention. He also reported that there were thirty-nine (39) clergy present who duly affirmed that they were ordained and in good standing in the Episcopal Church for the past three months. This brought the total deputies present to one hundred and twelve (112), which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business. He also indicated that the Convention would dispense with a formal roll call and accordingly certified the roll of parishes for the Convention.

The Bishop then asked the Convention to recognize the fact that he, with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, had granted to the Synodal Church of the Transfiguration in Clairton the status of being an affiliated congregation of the Episcopal Church under Canon I.16. The Bishop indicated that the church had seats at Convention, but no vote. The Bishop asked the Convention to welcome them.

The Bishop then moved the approval of the Minutes of the 150th Annual Convention of the Diocese found in the Preconvention Journal. The Rev. Michelle Boomgaard commented that the correct name of the member of the laity elected to the Committee on Constitutions and Canons is Ansley Westbrook. So noted, the Minutes were then duly approved and adopted by unanimous vote.

The Rev. Lou Hays, President of Diocesan Council, then moved that the Convention adopt the printed agenda for the Convention. There being no discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

The Bishop then recognized the Rev. Scott T. Quinn, who reported on the status of the Cathedral and its efforts to improve its financial health and physical condition.

The Bishop then asked the Rev. Nancy Chalfant-Walker, who, with Mr. Russ Ayres, co-chairs of the Nomination Committee, to make the report of the Committee.

She then reported on each of the offices to be filled and the nominees for such offices. After the report for each office, the Bishop asked if there were any additional nominees from the floor. There were no additional nominations.

The Rev. Chalfant-Walker then moved that nominations be closed, whereupon the Bishop recognized Mr. Jon Delano and the Rev. William Geiger, who then instructed the Convention on the process for voting.

Ballots were then cast by Convention deputies.

The Bishop then introduced the Keynote Speaker of the Convention, the Rev. B. De Neice Welsh. A transcript of her address is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

At the conclusion of her address, the Bishop thanked her for a stirring and inspiring message of hope and unity. He then outlined the specifics of the upcoming Presiding Bishop's visit and invited everyone to participate actively and enthusiastically when the time came.

He then declared the Convention in recess until the next morning at 9:00 a.m.

### **Saturday, November 5, 2016**

The registration of deputies commenced at 8:00 a.m. The Bishop called the Convention to order at 9:00 a.m.

The Bishop then highlighted a large box labeled "Standing Rock" and invited those attending the Convention to provide financial support by way of free will offerings for the Diocese of North Dakota to provide aid to those protesting the construction of a pipeline across a sacred Sioux burial ground. He indicated that the local Episcopal parish, many dioceses, the Presiding Bishop and the Executive Council had all gone on record supporting the protests.

The Bishop then asked the Judges of Elections to report on the results from the previous night's vote.

They reported as follows (\*denotes elected):

#### **For The Board of Trustees (two to be elected):**

Kenneth Gray	18
Daniel Moore	25
*Dana Phillips	70
*Amy Shelley	58
Lyle Wood	36

#### **For the Cathedral Chapter (one clergy, one lay):**

##### **Clergy:**

*The Rev. Joseph Baird	103
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##### **Laity:**

Betty Duckstein	52
*Anne Robb	53

#### **For the Commission on Ministry (one to be elected, either clergy or lay):**

The Rev. Charles Hamill	37
The Rev. Linda Wilson	37
Joyce Donadee	34

#### **For The Committee on Constitution and Canons (one clergy, one lay):**

##### **Clergy:**

The Rev. Charles Hamill	41
*The Rev. Shawn Malarkey	66

##### **Laity:**

*Betsy Hetzler	103
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**For the Disciplinary Board (two clergy, one lay):**

**Clergy:**

\*The Rev. Catherine Brall 96  
\*The Rev Jean Chess 103

**Laity:**

\*Jean Adams 100

**For the Standing Committee (one clergy, one lay):**

**Clergy:**

\*The Rev Eric McIntosh 92

**Laity:**

Russell Ayres 51  
Terlene Brown 31  
Elizabeth Pearson 22

**For the Clergy Deputy to General Convention (Four to be elected):**

\*The Rev. Nancy Chalfant-Walker 72  
The Rev. Herbert Daly 26  
The Rev. T.J. Freeman 36  
The Rev. Jeffrey Murph 41  
The Rev. Kristian Opat 49  
The Rev. Scott Quinn 54  
The Rev. Bruce Robison 37  
\*The Rev. James Simons 61  
The Rev. Nancy Threadgill 32

**For the Lay Deputy to General Convention (Four to be elected):**

Michael Braxton 44  
Lisa Brown 31  
\*Jon Delano 60  
Joan Gundersen 40  
Neal Heiss 19  
Kevin Hipolit 22  
Jamie McMahan 40  
Erin Morey 26  
Bruce Quayle 18  
Mary Roehrich 30  
Jaclyn Slobodnyak 22  
Steve Stagnitta 41  
Sig Tragard 12

Mr. Delano reported that the Convention had not yet reached the required majorities for the Standing Committee lay position, or for both clergy and lay General Convention Deputies. He also reported a tie in the voting for Commission on Ministry, which would require another vote. He instructed the Convention to vote for one lay member of Standing Committee and one member of the Commission on Ministry. Father Geiger instructed the Convention to vote for two clergy deputies to General Convention and three lay deputies, indicating that the Rules of Order stipulated that on the second and subsequent ballots, the number of candidates may not exceed twice the number remaining to be elected. After further instructions, the Convention proceeded to a second ballot.

The Bishop then called on Ms. Kathi Workman, Diocesan Treasurer, to present the proposed budget for 2017. Following the report and a motion for approval and discussion, the budget was approved unanimously by Convention. Ms. Workman also announced a seminar for treasurers of parishes to be held at Trinity Cathedral.

The Bishop called upon Mr. Michael Braxton for his report from the Constitution and Canons Committee. Mr. Braxton then presented a motion for the proposed canonical change to Section 3 of Canon XV, as set forth in the Preconvention Journal. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Braxton then moved the amendment of the Standing General Rules of Order, Rule B-3, section a., so that the words “provided, however, that in accordance with Canon IV, Section 2, there shall be at least two nominees for each office of Trustee-at-Large, and provided, further” be struck from the section. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Bishop then called on the Rev. Charles Hamill, Chair of the Resolutions Committee.

Father Hamill moved the adoption of **Resolution 1:** concerning the 250th Anniversary of the Widows Corporation found in the Preconvention Journal. The motion was approved unanimously.

Father Hamill then presented the following resolution:

#### **Resolution in Recognition of Volunteers**

WHEREAS this Diocese has been enriched by the gifts of time and talent offered by many volunteers; and

WHEREAS the work of the Diocese depends on the many hours donated by those who serve on diocesan committees, commissions, and task forces, volunteer in the archives and help with Convention; and

WHEREAS this annual Convention has depended on volunteers to register, guide visitors count ballots and lead our worship; be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh gratefully acknowledges the many hours of unpaid service offered so willingly and with such good spirit and hereby request that all those here present who have provided volunteer service for the diocese since our last Convention stand receive the thanks of the Convention.

The motion passed unanimously. After the applause, Father Hamill moved the following resolution:

#### **Resolution of Thanks to St Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon**

WHEREAS St. Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon and its staff and members have for a second year in a row hosted the diocesan annual convention; and

WHEREAS this Diocese has been well fed, escorted, directed and generally welcomed with smiles and helping hands, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the officers, deputies, bishop and visitors participating in this Convention tender St. Paul’s our sincere thanks for the many ways, large and small, that the people of the parish have worked to smooth the course of events and provide us with a welcoming site for our Convention.

The motion was passed unanimously.

The Bishop then called upon the Rev. Lou Hays to present a report from the Diocesan Compensation Committee. After a brief overview, Father Hays then moved the adoption of the revised Compensation Guide and all its Appendices as set forth in the Preconvention Journal. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Bishop then recognized the Deputy Judge of Elections for his latest report, as follows.

**For the Commission on Ministry (one to be elected, either clergy or lay):**

*The Rev. Charles Hamill	51
The Rev. Linda Wilson	41
Joyce Donadee	28

**For the Standing Committee (one lay):**

*Russell Ayres	61
Terlene Brown	56

**For the Clergy Deputy to General Convention (two to be elected):**

The Rev. Jeffrey Murph	56
*The Rev. Kristian Opat	66
*The Rev. Scott Quinn	67
The Rev. Bruce Robison	33

**For the Lay Deputy to General Convention (three to be elected):**

*Michael Braxton	64
Lisa Brown	55
Joan Gundersen	51
Jamie McMahan	56
Mary Roehrich	45
Steve Stagnitta	52

Father Geiger reported that a majority had not yet been reached for all lay deputy positions to General Convention. Accordingly, he instructed Convention to vote for two lay deputies from the remaining slate of four.

After the ballots were collected, the Bishop declared the Convention in recess for the Eucharist, lunch involving District Meetings, and Convention workshops, and asked the Secretary to provide instructions to the Deputies. During the Eucharist, the Bishop delivered his address to Convention within the context of his sermon. A copy of his sermon is attached hereto as Exhibit C.

After lunch, the Bishop called the Convention to order and called upon the Judge of Elections for his report.

Father Geiger reported as follows:

**For Lay Deputy to General Convention (two to be elected):**

*Lisa Brown	63
Joan Gundersen	55
*Jamie McMahon	62
Steve Stagnitta	55

Father Geiger then announced the results of elections held during district caucuses as follows:

**District 1**

**Chair:** Rick Mathews, Christ Church, North Hills

**Vice Chair:** The Rev. Bert Daly, St. Paul's, Kittanning

**Council:** Kevin Hipolit, Emmanuel, North Side

**District 2**

**Chair:** The Rev. Michael Foley, Redeemer, Squirrel Hill

**Vice Chair:** Roslyn Pratt, St. Matthew's, Homestead

**Council:** Sheila Stagnitta, St. Andrew's, Highland Park

**District 3**

**Chair:** Jon Delano, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon

**Vice Chair:** Amy Shelley, St. Thomas, Canonsburg

**Council:** Justin Rubenstein, St. David's, Peters Township

**Trustees:** Betty Duckstein, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon

**District 4**

**Chair:** The Rev. Nancy Threadgill, St. Mark's, Johnstown

**Vice Chair:** Courtney Foreman, St. Mark's, Johnstown

**Council (2018):** Duwayne Ladd, St. Peter's, Blairsville

**Council (2019):** Kathy Baird, St. Peter's, Blairsville

At the conclusion of the report, Mr. Andy Roman, the Chancellor of the Diocese, moved that, in accordance with the provisions of Rules of Order B.2, the four alternate Deputies to General Convention be determined by those with the four next highest votes as determined by the already completed ballots. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously. By virtue of the resolution, the Convention elected the following alternate deputies: Dr. Joan Gundersen, Mr. Steve Stagnitta, Ms. Mary Roehrich and Ms. Erin Morey.

The Bishop then led a discussion concerning the themes of the workshops conducted earlier in the afternoon. The Bishop concluded by announcing that the 152nd Diocesan Convention would be held on November 10 and 11, 2017, at a location to be announced. He offered a closing prayer and moved that the Convention be adjourned. The motion, duly moved and seconded, passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair  
Secretary to Convention

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Presiding Bishop's Message 151st Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh November 4, 2016**

*The transcript of the Most Reverend Michael Curry's greeting, delivered by recorded video:*

Hello to my brothers and sisters in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh as you gather for your 151st Diocesan Convention. I bring you the greetings of your brothers and sisters of The Episcopal Church and I likewise greet you in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

It really is a joy to bring you these greetings and I really look forward to being with you next February. Your bishop has been so kind and gracious to invite me, and so I look forward to being with you.

I understand the theme for your Convention is "Forming Our Future." And when I was thinking about that Convention theme, I thought of a text from Saint Paul in Philippians where he says, "forgetting what is behind, I press on to the mark of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

May you press on toward the mark of that upward call in the way of Jesus, the way of His love, the way of His goodness, the way of His Good News. Press on, Pittsburgh. Press on and we press on together to go forward into God's future.

God love ya. God bless you. And you keep the faith.



## **EXHIBIT B**

### **Keynote Address 151st Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh November 4, 2016**

*The prepared text of the address given by the Rev. B. De Neice Welch, Senior Pastor, Bidwell United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh:*

#### **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

*The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'" So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the*

*breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army. Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"*

To be clear, this passage is a depiction of a vision given to Ezekiel by *the hand of the Lord*. And so this powerful declaration comes from that prophetic point: that the hand of the Lord was upon him. There is something about the hand of the Lord being upon you. You get compelled to go where you would not go. You get compelled to speak what you would not normally say. You get compelled to act in ways you might not normally act, but because of the hand of the Lord, you can speak truth to power, travel through time and space and not know how you got there – even prophesy to dry bones.

So with the hand of the Lord upon him, he gets carried away by the Spirit of the Lord into a valley. And when he looks around he discovers that he's not just in any valley, but in a valley filled with dry bones. Now look closely at the bones. These are *dry* bones. There is nothing left on these bones. The worms have eaten the flesh. The birds have devoured the carcasses. The sun has scorched the skeletons and the marrow has gone dry. Well, who are these people and what has happened to them that they ended up in a valley, unburied, and left to rot in the heat of the sun? Was this an army of men who died in battle? Was this a village of people who died in a famine? Who are these people and how did this become their final resting place?

Well, we understand from verse 11 who these bones are and how they have come to be. We are told that these bones are the whole House of Israel: every soul of Israel; every old person, every young person; every male and every female. This is not the divided House of Israel. This is not Israel and Judah, but lying here in a valley is the united House as it was created, as it was ordained, as it was envisioned: the entire House of Israel.

And then we learn that the bones can speak and they have an explanation as to how they have come to be dry bones. And the bones say to us, "Our bones are dried up; our hope is gone; we are cut off." It is interesting that while the bones are good and dry, they can still speak. It is like Abel's blood that called from the ground to its God. It is like the hand without a body that wrote on a wall with a message from its God. It is like the mule that spoke to its rider when its rider could not see his Lord. The point is that when the hand of the Lord is involved, and the Spirit of the Lord is in charge, things that do not speak will, a mouth that has been silence will utter speech, things that are supposed to be dead will make sound.

The dry bones begin to speak of their plight. They proclaim their dried up state. They became dry because the hope they used to have has turned into despair. The dreams they used to have turned to despair. The plans they used to envision cannot be seen anymore, and so without hope, experiencing a loss of hope has turned these once living bones into very dead bones.

And here's something else. The spirit of God does not just take Ezekiel to the bones: he causes Ezekiel to walk *through* the bones. The text tells us, the Spirit walked Ezekiel back and forth through the bones. God did not allow Ezekiel to view the bones, as if this were some macabre tourist scene. He compelled him to get down in the valley *with* the bones. And while among the bones, he saw how very dry they were. He also saw how many there were. Do not forget these bones represent the whole House of Israel. At one point we know they numbered over two million when they left Egypt. There they are: lying in the

valley a great many dry bones when they were given a land flowing with milk in honey, living in houses they did not build and enjoying the fruit of vines they did not plant. The people who occupied the land were driven out on behalf of Israel: the land was given to them even though it was already inhabited. So what did they do with this massive blessing from the One who wanted to be their God?

You know the story. They served other Gods. They disobeyed God when he said drive them all out, do not leave one alive. It was harsh to us, but God was driving out foreign gods, people who would always threaten their safety, and people who did not follow the ways of Yahweh. God wanted their worship to be pure, their obedience to be sure, and their lives to be blessed so that when others looked upon them they would know they are a people who are blessed by the one true and living God. These were to be God's people and God was to be their God. But instead, they worshipped idols that could not deliver them. They worshipped gods who could not see or hear them. They sacrificed to images that could not keep them. They disobeyed the laws given to Moses written by God's own hand. They squandered their blessing and then they lobbied the insult of all insults: they asked for a king. They traded the Most High God in for a human king and forgetting who God actually was and is. And when you do that, bad things begin to happen. Not only did they get carried off into captivity. Not only did other nations conquer them, exile them, and separate them, they got to a point where they bought into their own self-hatred and separated themselves. No longer were they a united nation, but they were a divided kingdom: two nations divided against God. And when the idols did not save them, and when the images did not repay them for their sacrifices, and when their human kings could not save them, they found there was nothing that they could put their hope in. They found that nothing and no one could do for them what God the Almighty could do. And so they found that their hope had dried up. They were cut off from the only God and a lack of hope causes your bones to dry up and die. A society without hope is dry. A community not connected to the one true God, is a dead community, and a people who do not know who God is, is a people with no hope, no future, no life, just dry bones.

Proverbs 17 says, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 15 says, "A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones." Proverbs 3 says, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones." And when the whole House of Israel's bones continues to speak, they say "our hope is lost." The root of the word translated "lost" in Hebrew does not only mean to "vanish," but it means to "perish." So hope has not been misplaced, or delayed: hope has not only vanished or is not visible – hope has literally perished. Perished hope in the Hebrew language means it is no more. It cannot be recalled because it is utterly and completely gone. And so while Ezekiel walks through the bones, he gets a better understanding of the hopeless condition of these bones.

But there could be yet another reason as to why the Spirit walked Ezekiel back and forth through the bones and this is just my supposition. When you observe a thing you remain outside of a thing. When you get into a thing you understand it better than when you merely look at, observe or test a thing. When you get into a thing, you usually find points within a thing that you identify with, or points within a thing that are familiar, similar, or just like your thing and so you find that you are just like the thing you're trying to observe. But God knows our hearts better than we do. God is able to see our secrets when nobody else can. God who can separate bone from marrow, intention from motive, truth from fallacy can take us into places so we can find out just who we are. If the bones are the whole House of Israel, then Ezekiel is not distant from the bones, he is a part of the bones. And while he is a prophet of God, he has also lost hope, he has also dried up and he is also cut off and like Israel hope has turned to despair and together they now inhabit a valley filled with the deadness of their bones.

That is what a lack of hope will do. That is what hopelessness will create. A community; a city; a country; a world full of dry bones. I know it to be true. So when the last round of shootings occurred in our country, I felt that hopelessness creep up in my own bones. I know we've gotten past that fateful

week, but when the police officers were shot in Dallas, I felt that hopelessness creep up into my bones because my hope was drying up. I don't care what color your party is, we all have a high degree of anxiety over every scandal, every story, every ad – locally and nationally and the hopelessness of a better society causes my bones to dry a little more each day. Racism and disrespect for women, an unsafe world for our children; rhetoric, violence and hatred fill our airways and I know we keep trying to put these things away and move on but that's one of the reasons why these things keep occurring. Our bones are so dry that we are numb and we become deaf and we sit in our hopelessness and remain inactive.

And those who try to do something about it get criticized and minimized for their activism. Proponents of the Black Lives Matter Movement have been vilified and our hopelessness says that neither black life nor black death matters to anyone. Those who are fighting for a union and fair wages have been maligned and our hopelessness says that as long as corporate greed remains untouched, the average worker will never have the chance to advance. Watching more and more African Americans being moved out of the city with no chance of being able to afford a home within the development going on around the city causes my hopelessness to rise but what is even more frightening is that people act as if they do not see it. But I guess you can't see it if it doesn't affect you. I feel as if we are headed for an apartheid state and while whites are feeling prosperous, blacks are feeling disenfranchised, and the hopelessness goes on. In this city, where I live, and where I have raised my children and now my grandchildren witnessed the cries of people over what they thought was plagiarism from a superintendent candidate but said nothing when Melania Trump actually plagiarized Michelle Obama's speech caused hopelessness to creep into my bones. I think I live in a city, a state, and a nation filled with dry bones! We are dry. Our hope has perished.

And we are cut off.

And God had the nerve to ask Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?"

How can you ask a bone if a dry bone can live? What possible intelligent thing can one bone say about another bone? How can a bone answer for a bone? So the bone says to its God the only possible thing it can say? "O Sovereign Lord, only you know!" Only you know if marrow can come back to a dry bone. Lord, only you know if the bones even have a will to live again. Lord, only you know if the bones want to get up from this valley grave and turn their fleshly hearts toward you, and obey you, and live for you, and worship only you. Lord, only you know if these bones want to live a new life, wholly and committed to you, or if the bones will just go back to being the way they've always been. Lord only you know if these bones are tired of resting in a valley or want to try living on the top of the world. Lord only you know if these bones can live.

But a valley filled with dead bones is not a new thing. A valley filled with dead bones is not an unheard of thing. When U.S. Steel first got started, black men who were forced into slave labor through the prison system died on the job, their bodies were thrown into mass graves in the south. And they are now a valley filled with dry bones. In the Holocaust, in Auschwitz, when the imprisoned Jews died, or when they felt like killing them, or when they were taken from the gas chambers, they were not buried with dignity, their bodies were thrown into mass graves and the graves became a valley filled with dry bones. The sea itself, during the Middle Passage, the ocean bottom became filled with the bodies of enslaved African men, women, and children and the ocean became a valley filled with dead bones. And now for the second time in Haiti, the storm has claimed the lives of 1,000 people. There are more dead people than the cemeteries can handle and so there are mass graves being filled with storm claimed dead and Haiti is becoming a valley filled with dead bones. There are dead bones in Italy, dead bones in Africa, and dead bones in Asia. Our world is filled with dead bones!

And I wonder if our bones can live again. I wonder if we are ready to put away the complaints and roll up our sleeves. I wonder if God's people who are called by his name are ready to humble themselves and pray: turn from their own wicked ways and seek God's face. I wonder if the people of God want to get up and be used by God or do we just all want to lay around head cut off from our feet? I wonder if we have the desire to cry out to God, the only source of life and strength, the only source of justice and truth, the only source of righteousness and peace – do we want him to revive us or do we want to just sit in our self constructed booths? You sit under a booth too long and you become a dry bone. I wonder if we think God can revive us again or has our hope permanently turned to despair? I wonder if we are ready for radical ministry or do we want to keep doing things that don't bless nobody, maintain structures of racism and economic inequality, and using the church funds to do it? Son of man, daughter of God, can these bones live?

And God gives the answer. He said to Ezekiel – “*Prophesy.*” Talk to the bones – even though they are dry and despair has set in. Prophesy and tell them the Lord says they can live. And since the Lord made them, he can reinvigorate them. Prophesy and tell them hope is coming back. Because you see faith is the substance of things *hoped* for. Prophesy – send a word and tell them I will make them live again because man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceed from the mouth of the Lord. Prophesy and tell them I will make them live again. I will put the breath back in these bones. I will attach tendon to the bones and make flesh appear on the bones and skin to cover the bones and when I'm done you will know that I the Lord have done this!

I love this! God does not consult an architect: he is the architect. God does not consult a doctor. He is the divine Physician. God does not call in a contractor: he is the Author and the Finisher. Tell the bones, that I will reverse the decay process and remember they're bones once again. So when Ezekiel, the bone, starts prophesying to the bones, all of a sudden, there was a sound. A rattling noise was heard among the bones. At the word of God, bones began to move. The right bone became connected to the right bone. Each bone found its owner and went back to the body it came from. And when Ezekiel looked, flesh, tendons, muscles all appeared on the bones and there arose a great army of the whole House of Israel. But one thing was missing: there was no breath in them.

And here we find another great truth. You can be dressed up and look like you're alive but without the breath of God, the Spirit of God, the power of God, you are just a dressed up bone. We have dressed up bones walking around looking like they are alive when indeed they are dead and dry and without hope. You can see death in the eyes of our young black men who no longer hope in God, the church, or God's people. You can see death in the eyes of our young women who thought having his baby would make him love them. You can see fear in the eyes of our seniors who don't know if they will be cared for or not. You can see death in the eyes of our middle agers who have to still take care of children and then turn around and take care of aging parents, who didn't know retirement didn't mean death, it just meant more time for caring for others while you yourself fall apart. Dressed up bones that think God no longer cares for them and the Church is irrelevant. Dressed up bones that believe this world is out of the range of redemption.

But I got a word of prophesy for you. We have something that Ezekiel's bones did not. We have something that Ezekiel's eyes did not comprehend. Because God tells him a second time to prophesy, but this time he has to prophesy to the wind. The word for wind is *ruach*, which is the same word for the Spirit. He said call the wind for these bones but he sent to us the Spirit. The wind made Ezekiel's valley come to life, but we have something else or should I say *Someone* else. We have a Savior who sent us the Spirit. We have the word that was also made flesh and came and walked back and forth through the earth with us. We have the word that was there in the beginning. The Ancient word that is the Ancient of Days, who was there when the world was created, who became flesh and got up on a cross and spoke through his blood and redeemed us all. We have the presence of the word that came to Ezekiel's bones

and a Savior who also knew what it was like to be bones in the earth. But ours came through the grave, came through the heavens, and sent us back the Spirit that makes us alive and because he lives, we live and because we live, we have hope. Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name –on Christ! Jesus Christ, the hope of Glory. Jesus Christ, the strength of my bones. Jesus Christ the center of my joy! Jesus Christ my hope for tomorrow. Jesus Christ, the lily among the bones of the valley. And it is this same Jesus, who when he ascended, sent us the Spirit.

And remember the sound that came when the bones started hearing the word of God? Well, when the spirit came, there came another sound. It was a sound like a rushing mighty wind. And it covered the whole house. And everybody started prophesying, speaking, and uttering speech: whether it was their native tongue or whether it was a foreign tongue. All I know is there was a sound when the people became filled with the Spirit. All I want to know is can these bones, Bidwell bones, Macedonia bones, live again? Is there a sound in the house today? Is the Spirit moving in here today? Can the Lord send us hope again? Can he take away our despair and give us hope once more? Can these bones believe again? Is there a sound in the house because the Spirit is reviving us again? Is there a rattling of bones coming back to life in here tonight? Do I hear a rattling because you believe in the power of the word of God? Is there an army of people that will stand on their feet and fight for justice, fight for our children fight for the sake of the Lord? Is there anybody who is on the battlefield for our Lord? Is there a Spirit of praise in the House for the Lord has given you hope? Has he done anything for you then you ought to bless his name and declare your hope has returned. Your joy has returned. Your darkness has been removed. You are up from the grave. You looked at your hands and your hands looked new. You looked at your feet and they did too, and now you're on the battlefield for the Lord!



## **EXHIBIT C**

### **Bishop's Address to Convention 151st Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh November 5, 2016**

*The transcript of the sermon preached at the Eucharist by the Right Reverend Dorsey W.M. McConnell, VIII Bishop of Pittsburgh:*

*“Not that I have already obtained the resurrection from the dead or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” (Phil. 3:12) Come, Holy Spirit, and kindle the hearts and minds of your faithful people with the power of your word in Jesus Christ, our Incarnate, Crucified, Risen, and Ascended Lord. Amen.*

Well, friends, you know the Gospel is all about Good News, and the good news for you all this morning begins with the fact that this sermon and address will be considerably shorter than last year's. The reason is two-fold: first, the less I talk to you, the more time you will have with each other – in fellowship, in the formation workshops, over lunch – second, I want you to be deeply fed with the word of God and the love of your bishop and our love for each other, more than I want to tell you “stuff.” You can read my report about “stuff” in Section D [of the Preconvention Journal] and if, after you do, there is “stuff” you still need to hear from me, just ask me at lunch, or give me a ring, or send me a note. And all I would ask you in return for the additional several minutes of your life that you get back, is that you take five minutes

after this liturgy to stay where you are and make a connection with someone you do not know, or do not know as well as you know others; that you find out who they are and where they go to church, which ought to be easy, since most of us have name tags. Ask them what the Lord has done for them most recently, and then ask them what they need prayer for. Then – and I know we’re Episcopalians here and some may be a little shy on this one – either pray for each other then and there, or at least take it away in your heart and pray for them later.

As for the food I hope you will receive in this sermon, I’d like you to turn to the person on either side of you, shake that person’s hand, and say to them, “*Christ Jesus has made you His own.*”

[*Note to reader: the people do so.*]

Isn’t that wonderful? To have somebody say that to you? Actually, all these strategic priorities that I articulated several years ago and keep coming back to, of a public Gospel, of missional communities, and the formation of Christians in leadership, all of that is compressed in the mysteries of these words: *Christ Jesus has made us His own.*

Of course, those priorities don’t say it as well. But that is the full good news of the Gospel in compressed form. *Christ Jesus has made us His own.* It is like a zip file from Saint Paul to us. It has huge implications: it says, first of all, that the work of God in Jesus Christ is complete. In Jesus Christ, God has taken on our nature. In His Cross, He has not only forgiven our sins but has reconciled all things to Himself. In His rising from the dead, He has overturned the limits of death itself and raised us with Him to new life. In the sending of His Spirit into his church, He has graciously equipped, and joyfully commissioned, and solemnly commanded us not only to go, not only to teach the nations, not only to baptize, but to let God renew the face of the earth through us. Of course the Lord is working in the world, with or without us, but the work of renewal, of revival, of reconciliation in the hearts of men and women, the work of making our neighborhoods and families look more and more like God’s Kingdom, cannot and will not take place without us, without God’s Church. God’s sustaining presence in the world needs the Lord’s renewing and redeeming presence through the Church, as our liturgy says, to complete His work in the world and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all. It’s a beautiful commission, but it’s also a huge responsibility, and there’s a warning in it, because if we refuse, or shrink back, or say we are too busy with other things, or ask Him to go find somebody else, our neighborhoods are not revived, our families are not renewed, men and women are not redeemed, and as our speaker, Pastor De Neice Welch, reminded us last night, all we are left with within the Church is a pile of dry bones, rattling around in a few beautiful buildings, but in the world, valleys of the dead and the dying. And if that is the route we choose to go, we the Church will bear a special responsibility before the judgment seat of Christ, as He looks at us, and says where were you when my children were dying?

I will tell you that question goes with me every moment of every day as your bishop. I hear the Lord’s deep yearning in that question, and in that yearning, His deep love. I hear the tears and blood and sweat of the Cross. I feel the glory of the empty tomb. I have the fire of Pentecost, and all that, in my hands and in my heart, every day with the command to get out there and share it, and to support you and love you while you get out there and share it. And every day, at the end of the day, I wonder at how little I have done, and then I come back to the promise in Paul’s words: *Christ Jesus has made me His own.* And I drink from those words like a man crazy with thirst for the lasting hope, that when I am weak, then I am strong. As I do so, I discover that somewhere deep in the recesses of my spirit that God’s grace is sufficient, that His strength is made perfect in my weakness. I drink from these words, brothers and sisters, the very same words that Presiding Bishop Curry sent us as a message last night. I remind myself that God does not want a strong church, or a heroic church, all He wants is a faithful Church, a Church that really believes He has made us His own and is willing to walk with Him in the world as He acts

through us, to redeem His children and revive our families and renew our neighborhoods and re-create the face of the earth.

Now, you may say, of course we believe that. I mean we say it every Sunday in the Creeds, we pray it in the Mass, and I know we do. I know we believe it up in our minds, but how much of it gets into our souls, into our hearts; how much of it changes us deep down to alter our lifestyles and our calendars and our friendships, the people we know or the people we choose not to know? Because if you were to look at the whole Church – and I'm not just picking on us, but the whole Church from God's point of view, you would see not enough evidence that we really had taken in the fact that Christ Jesus had made us His own. If we really believed that, the world would be pounding down our doors. The world would look at us and find hope, would listen to us and find encouragement, and see in us an example of what it means to love like Jesus loves, those love those who hate us, to pray for those who abuse us, maybe they would see a household and a table where there was neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; but from every family, language, people and nation, a kingdom of priests gathered around in God's great house, black and white together, great and small, rich and poor, healing and being healed all at the same time, because they all knew that Christ had made them His own. It's a beautiful vision, friends, and the Bible says this is normal life if we want it.

But instead, the world looks at us and sees a household as divided as the world itself. Just look around southwestern Pennsylvania. There are over two dozen Christian denominations that I know of: multiple varieties of Catholics, many kinds and stripes of Orthodox, two brands of Anglicans, two brands of Lutherans, and many others, white churches and African-American churches. And while there are deep and valid historical and doctrinal differences among us, and while there is a great richness displayed in the distinctiveness and breadth of our traditions, the fact is that we all have failed to take in the full meaning of what it actually would mean for us to stand together as children of a common Father whom Christ has made His own; and because we have failed in that, we are all facing the same problems as Church. There isn't a single one of us, of these denominations, that isn't struggling to connect with our youth and our neighborhoods. We preach reconciliation and yet we cannot dare to cross the great barrier that has been drawn down the middle of our society, which has been brought to our attention again in the ugliest of ways during this election season, and I mean the barrier of race. Here in this region particularly, the barrier between white and black, and just beyond that and tied up with it, the barrier between rich and poor. And as long as these divisions are not only amplified in the Church, and as Pastor Welch was suggesting last night, as long as they are sanctified in the Church, God will not use us the way He wants to use us, for the simple reason that He cannot heal a divided world through a divided Church.

The cost is huge. Look at the hopelessness around us, the way that so many folks who are not in our midst are not in our midst because they do not think we have anything to offer. They've gone off in search of antidotes to the pain and find it in other things. I believe God is putting all of this in front of our eyes again and again until we get the point, until we just stop and listen, and take it in – what it means, that Christ Jesus has made us His own, because if and when we really start to believe this, everything will change. It will take some time, but it will start as soon as we say “yes.”

So how do we do this? Where do we start? Well, we start here, sisters and brothers, in this beautiful place, in the company of these beautiful saints, the ones sitting next to you. Take a moment to look around, in front and in back of you. Oh, I wish you could see yourselves from my point of view. You are as beautiful an assembly of humanity... I mean, a little tilted to the pale side, but you are beautiful, and it's a beautiful beginning with God. So first, it seems God would say, “You are my beloved, my chosen ones and I have made you mine, so get formed.”

Get formed. Or rather, as Paul urged the Galatians, we have to let Christ be formed in us. This means taking in deeply the call to prayer we all have as Christians, the call to move deeply into God's word and

let God's spirit shape us more than just on Sunday mornings. You see, sisters and brothers, God's work is complete but we are still a work in progress, and He knows that. All He wants is to open our hearts and our minds and our souls so that He can start moving within us more deeply as we reach out to others. We have a beautiful start here, in the three workshops that are being given here today by faithful leaders who have given their time: Lisa and Christopher and Natalie. Whether they are giving you the lowdown on e-formation, or taking you through the discipline of discipleship groups, or helping you deepen the knowledge of Christ's love in your home and your family, they are all about the same thing: helping all of us hear, not just with your heads but with our hearts, what it means to have been made Christ's own; what it means to be marked with the cross and filled with the resurrection, and enlivened with God's own Holy Spirit, not only as your story, but as life for you and for the world.

Second, we need to get this so deeply, and God knows we can't get this on our own. Here's a story of a beautiful moment: I was with William Moyers as he was presenting on addiction at a huge gathering. He was speaking about recovery and there were a lot of distinguished people, including his parents, on the stage. It was at the 92nd Street "Y" in New York, and they circulated cards where the approximately one-thousand people in the audience could pose a question to those on the dais. All these cards came down, and there were far too many for them all to be answered. Somebody took one card from the middle of the stack and passed it along the stage. Each person, in succession, took it, looked at it, shook their head and looked sad, then passed it to the next until it got to William. He showed it to us. It read in erratic handwriting, "What do I do if I just don't want to live anymore?"

William looked out into the midst of all those people there and said, "Turn to the person next to you and ask for help." After the evening was over, he was greeting people at the front and this woman comes running down the aisle. "Mr. Moyers! Mr. Moyers!" It turns out the guy who wrote the question was named Bob and he was sitting next to this woman – and she is a psychiatric nurse in recovery. She got Bob's phone number and gave it to William, and promised that William would call him that night. And he did. Today this man is still not only alive, but thriving.

As important as private prayer is, and I think it is hugely important, we need to turn to the person next to us and ask for help. Don't assume that you are the only under-fed and under-nourished Christian in the room. We are all like that. And yet the resources that God has for us as we open our hearts to one another, to study the word with one another, to encourage one another, to pray for and with one another, will result in Christ being formed in us with such joy and such power that we can't image what will happen. And here, I am not talking just about fellowship and study within your parishes, wherever you find your local support. That's why today I asked you to sit next to somebody you don't know. If we are really to grow in Christ, to become the Church He wants us to be, then we have to start stretching, reaching out and building bridges, to pray and work with people who don't look like us, or sound like us, but who belong to us and we to them, because Christ has made us His own.

We had a start last night. We were all blessed by De Neice. Do we understand the courage it took for her to say "yes" to my offer? And how I knew it was going to take that kind of courage – so I didn't give her any time to get down from the pulpit that first time I met her – for an African American, a woman, and a Presbyterian, to stand before us and believe God had given her something to say? Can we understand how intractable the divisions are between black churches and white churches, how we have agreed to pass by one another like ships in the night, because there is just too much pain, too much mistrust, too long a history of shattered hopes and broken promises and diminished expectations, and just no energy to try again? But, God won't take no for an answer. He won't leave us alone, because He just loves us too much and He can't keep His power to Himself. We belong to Him, and He is in the business of binding up our broken hearts and healing our divisions, and He loves His Church too much to leave us this way. He will bring us together and re-clothe us in flesh and fill us with His spirit to reconcile us to one another and to the divided Church beyond our doors. It will be hard work, sisters and brothers, and long work for

our children and grandchildren to build on, but I believe it will be beautiful and lasting and good work, and that I will live to see it begin to bear fruit here – the day when Christians, no matter their color or denomination, even in Pittsburgh, begin to lean on one another, and show the world what the love of Christ can do when we say together, “We believe that Christ Jesus has made us His own.”

And that brings us to the third way we are invited to begin again, the third way we can start to grasp what it means that Christ has made us His own: we have to get on the road. You see, being formed in the love of Christ isn't something you do before you go on mission; in fact, we won't get it until we get on the road. You can hear that all over the Gospel text from Luke, which we heard this morning. Look at what is happening to the disciples just before this moment. They have had a fight over who is the greatest (tell me *that* doesn't sound like the Church); they have clumsily and almost catastrophically tried and failed to cast out a demon from a child; they have attempted to shut down someone else's ministry in the name of Jesus because (and I quote) he did not follow with us (he was a Methodist!). Jesus' response? Does he wag His finger and lecture? Does He throw them under the bus? Does He say, “you won't get any more God-power until you learn something?” No, what he does is this: he multiplies their number six-fold to 72, pairs them up, and sends them out, and says, “Show the world what it means that I have made you my own, and as you show them, you'll learn it yourselves. You will find yourself against your deepest instincts and against all your doubts, healing the sick, and casting out the demon in front of you; you will let your peace go everywhere, wherever it will rest. And if it doesn't rest, you won't feel any disappointment or resentment, you'll just keep going. And you will learn to rely utterly on me, and you may even get around to rejoicing that your names are written in heaven.”

I think the time has come for us to take on all three of these ways of learning that we are Christ's own. And I think the visit of our Presiding Bishop this coming February is a God-given opportunity for us to make a start toward the goal of a genuinely reconciled and reconciling Church in this region. You will notice in these four events, the four stages of Bishop Michael's pilgrimage among us, there are distinct gifts and great challenges for us. First, gathering Friday night to repent of our divisions and pledge a new beginning. Second, on Absalom Jones Day at Holy Cross in Homewood, to bless our children and youth with a vision of racial unity and unity in Christ's church, and give them some special time with their Presiding Bishop. Third, late that afternoon, to lay the groundwork of healing between African-American and white churches, so we can begin to make reconciliation a reality in our neighborhoods. I'm under no illusions; I know it will take a whole lot of work; this is a tentative step forward. Finally on Sunday morning, to come together in the middle of the Mon Valley to celebrate and proclaim the God who is able to put flesh on dry bones and breathe life into the slain. All this is easier said than done, sisters and brothers. Half of the Presiding Bishop's events take place at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, because it more closely resembles neutral ground than any of our churches possibly could. Reconciliation isn't going to happen if it's a matter of white folks inviting black folks to predominately white churches with the good news that we have rediscovered our conscience. And the other half – in Homewood and McKeesport – take place in two of our desperate neighborhoods because, if we believe what the Gospel of the 72 is teaching us, that is where we will begin to really discover what it means to be Christ's own, and bring it back to our parishes and our neighborhoods and actually be able to do the work there that God wants us to do. I'm hoping for 144 people there; 144, which is 72 doubled, and is divisible for small groups by just about any number you can think of, and if you multiply it by one-thousand, it is nothing less than the number of the Elect.

I know it is a tall order – so I'll settle for 288. But really, when you think about it, what could possibly go wrong? A few hundred Episcopalians from Pittsburgh, crossing bridges, two or three times, in February, on Super Bowl Weekend? I believe we are called to it, and I believe we are up for it. Because I know that Michael Curry is a gently and godly and Jesus- and Spirit-filled man, and that he tells the story with faith and integrity, and when you tell the story of Jesus people will run – five thousand of them – all the way around a lake just to hear it, and to hear His name and see His work. I know this diocese. I know

you are brave and faithful because of the gift God has given you. I know you believe in a God who can put flesh on dry bones and breathe life into the dead, because you came back from the brink of non-existence as a diocese and look at you now. Did you see those banners coming into the church? I stood there and said “Father, if I die now, it’s alright. We’re going to be OK!” We’ll be more than OK. You are vibrant, joyful, and full of faith. Yes, you hold back – we all hold back – but I know you want to go forward as we all do. I know you will, because I know one other little thing about you: you are a little crazy, because if you weren’t, you wouldn’t be here, and you wouldn’t have elected me, so let us get on with it. As we do, discover what it means that Christ has made us His own, and come together in prayer, in love for each one another. Stretch ourselves to reach out to others who bear the cross of Christ and His name, and share with them the power of His resurrection. Be reconciled to one another and to churches beyond our doors, that by the power of that same Spirit, the world around us might begin to learn the joy of reconciliation. As we come together, trust that we do so for one reason. As it says in John 17, “so that the world might believe that God has sent His Son, so that He may renew the face of the earth.”

Amen.

